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ABSTRACT

The personnel associated with institutions of higher education and state and local education agencies have an intertwined network which keeps everyone connected to these groups informed about community education. They promote the concepts, techniques, and programs of community education with inhouse activities such as workshops, seminars, conferences, newsletters, internships, and research papers. Now that this level of awareness has been reached, the "insiders" must also extend their knowledge of and enthusiam about community education to the "outsiders," who are current and future decision makers who can make or allow community education to develop. These outsiders are busy, involved citizens, including city administrators, extension agents, legislators, and county commissioners. The community education salesperson must: (1) get to know the outside customers and find out what kinds of community education they need: (2) develop an attractive package of community education: and (3) deliver the concept to the outsiders, using the methods developed and used by the insiders. The goal of the insiders should be to work until the insiders can t be distinguished from the outsiders in terms of community education awareness. (FG)

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SPREADING COMMUNITY EDUCATION AWARENESS BEYOND THE INSIDERS TO THE OUTSIDERS

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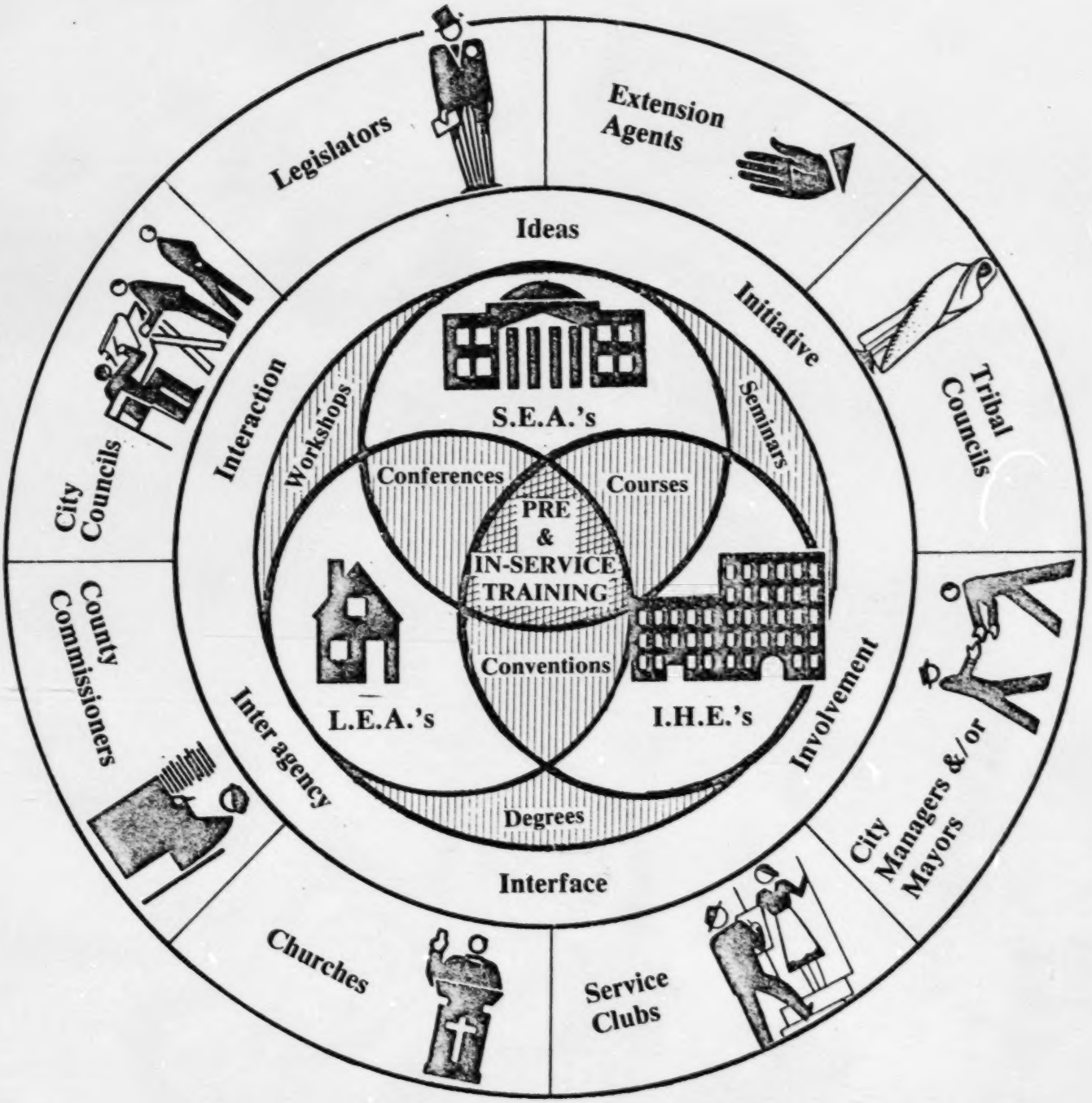
SPREADING COMMUNITY EDUCATION AWARENESS BEYOND THE INSIDERS TO THE OUTSIDERS

Across the nation and around the world great strides have been made in spreading community education awareness, implementation strategies, and operational techniques including processing and programming among our community educators at the Institutions of Higher Education (IHE's), State Education Agencies (SEA's), and the practitioners in the Local Education Agencies (LEA's). Community Education advisory councils, too, have generally been "educated" through a variety of visitations, in-service activities, workshops, seminars, conferences, and conventions. In other words, a fine job has been done of promoting the concept, techniques, processes, and programs of community education in-house -- among IHE, SEA, and LEA personnel. But isn't it time to think more broadly, now, and educate the outsiders (legislators, city managers, mayors and councils, service clubs, etc.) so they can become and will become aware (informed) supporters and promoters of community education too?

The outsiders are important current and future decision makers. These outsiders are the movers and shakers and often the purse string holders who can make (or allow) community education to develop (See model on page 2).

INSIDERS - (INTERCIRCLES)

The insiders -- personnel associated with IHE's, SEA's, and LEA's -- have an intertwined network of pre- and in-service training which, at the present time, does a tremendous job of keeping everyone associated with these inside groups informed, updated, and even futurized. Courses, seminars, newsletters, research papers, internships, degrees, workshops, conferences, and conventions provide variety, quality, stimulation, and



INSIDERS & OUTSIDERS OF COMMUNITY EDUCATION AWARENESS

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appropriate scope and sequence for the neophytes as well as the veterans in community education.

IHE's have great track records of spreading the Gospel of community education according to Saints Mott, Manley, Olson, Clapp, Seay, Melby, Beggs, Minzey, Weaver, and a host of other community education Saints and Angels. IHE's have established records and are even bettering those records of spreading the Gospel via training, leadership, research, grantsmanship, and service.

SEA's have spread and are spreading the concept of community education through dissemination of and consultation about policies and procedures. SEA's are in strategically advantageous positions to emanate the goodness and greatness of community education out into all the schools and communities in their respective states.

LEA's are now doing a fine job of spreading the concept to other insiders and some outsiders, too, by exchanging newsletters, trading and sharing ideas, forms, techniques, and human and physical resources. LEA's can provide a great, needed service by making organized efforts to spread the concept to the next town or city up or down the road. LEA's can often be most influential in spreading the concept because they may have more credibility with other LEA's than IHE's or SEA's do.

An immeasurably influential insider is the C.S. Mott Foundation. This Foundation has provided and continues to provide the impetus in terms of ideas and resources (human, physical, and financial) for spreading the concept across the nation and around the world to both the insiders and outsiders. The Foundation's efforts to network the network are admirable. The significance of the Mott Foundation in the movement cannot be overlooked, overstated, or overly praised.

OUTSIDERS - (OUTERCIRCLES)

In order for community education to really and truly become household words across the nation and around the world and to be completely understood and fully appreciated, the insiders must make various efforts to reach out to the outsiders to inform them of the potential greatness of the concept and the movement. The outsiders are the individuals and groups noted in the outercircle of the model. (Those shown in the model on page 2 represent only a few of the many outsiders.)

The insiders need to reach out and extend their knowledge and enthusiasm about community education to the outsiders. The insiders need to convey their many great ideas via the various avenues of interface, involvement, initiative, interaction, and interagency cooperation. The pre- and in-service training vehicles which have worked so well for the insiders -- workshops, seminars, courses, conferences, conventions, and degrees -- can be used, sometimes in modified delivery modes, to provide community education awareness for the outsiders.

It is essential to realize that the outsiders are not captive audiences. They are busy, involved citizens who may be part-timers, paid and unpaid, sometimes volunteers, and scattered across great expanses of geography. The people who constitute these groups differ widely philosophically, socially, emotionally, and politically, and their motivations are certainly diverse. When contemplating the model of delivery to the outsiders, generally the delivery will need to be on their turf during the time of their choosing and the format will need to be mutually planned with them.

The marketplace sales model is useful when selling community education awareness to the outsiders. First, the community education salesperson must

get to know the outside customers by visiting with them, gaining their confidence, and finding out what they want and need in terms of community education. Next, the sales staff needs to develop the product package of community education awareness so it will be attractive and palatable to the outsiders. Finally, the salespersons need to deliver -- sell -- the concept to the outsiders via the carefully planned, modified pre- and in-service training avenues so successfully used by the insiders.

One soft-sell delivery technique to employ which doesn't take much time or money, which will develop a degree of community education awareness among the outsiders, and which will "get a foot in the door" is to write short, informative articles about community education for publication in the house organs -- the newsletters, etc. -- of the various outside groups. In addition to the use of in-house publications of the outside groups, community education awareness can be widely disseminated to the general public through articles in the popular press in newspapers and magazines. One fine, recent example of this was the article "Schools as Community Centers," Changing Times, May, 1980, pp. 70-71.

CONCLUSION

The insiders have done an excellent job of training themselves and each other. Now is the time to make a concerted, organized effort to inform the outsiders about community education. The ultimate goal of the insiders should be to work long, hard, and effectively until the insiders can't be distinguished from the outsiders in terms of community education awareness, information, support, and promotion. Then, community education will be an integral part of the social fabric and a dynamic force across the nation and around the world.